DEVELOPING A SPEAKING SIMULATION WEBSITE FOR BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDENTS: AN ATTEMPT TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS AND PROMOTE AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

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Abstrak

Tuntutan dari tempat kerja masa depan telah mengubah cara guru mengelola kelas, dari lebih fokus pada penyampaian materi pembelajaran, menjadi beroperasi pada berbagai sumber daya untuk mengeluarkan ide-ide baru dan memecahkan masalah kehidupan nyata. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan dan mengevaluasi e-book dan website yang dibuat untuk mengatasi kekurangan mahasiswa dalam mengakses materi belajar mandiri untuk kemampuan berbahasa Inggris Bisnis yang sesuai dengan kurikulum mereka dan sesuai dengan tingkat kemahiran bahasa Inggris mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan Model ADDIE untuk mengembangkan dan mengevaluasi materi digital bagi mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris Bisnis dengan empat tahapan utama yaitu; Menganalisis, Mendesain, Mengembangkan, Menerapkan, dan Mengevaluasi. E-book terdiri dari sepuluh topik yang dipilih berdasarkan analisis kebutuhan dan tinjauan pustaka. Evaluasi dilakukan oleh satu guru Bahasa Inggris dan 13 siswa Bahasa Inggris Bisnis sebagai pengguna, masing-masing mengisi survei untuk mengevaluasi website. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa situs Business English Speaking menyediakan berbagai sumber dan tugas yang bervariasi bagi mereka untuk belajar dan mempraktikkan keterampilan berbicara mereka secara mandiri, sehingga mereka lebih mandiri dalam proses belajar, meskipun beberapa fiturnya perlu lebih ditingkatkan. Para siswa juga melaporkan bahwa situs web dan e-book telah dirancang dengan baik dengan berbagai tugas dan materi otentik yang dapat membantu mereka meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara karena mereka memiliki lebih banyak materi dan eksposur ke kosakata Bahasa Inggris Bisnis.

Keywords: Business English, speaking skill, website development, Business English speaking, autonomous learning

Abstract

The demand from the future workplace has shifted the way teachers manage the classroom, from focusing more on the delivery of learning materials, to operate on varied resources to bring out new ideas and solve real life problems. The present research aimed to develop and evaluate an ebook and a website created to solve students" lack of easily-accessed self-study materials for Business English speaking skill that is in accordance with their curriculum and suitable for their English proficiency level. The research utilized ADDIE Model to develop and evaluate digital materials for Business English students with four main stages namely; Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate. The e-book consisted of ten topics chosen based on the needs analysis and literature reviews. The evaluation was carried out by one English teacher and 13 Business English students as users, each of them filled in surveys to evaluate the website. The results revealed that the Business English speaking website provided varied sources and varied tasks for them to learn and practice their speaking skill independently, making them more autonomous in their learning process, although some of its features need more improvement. The students also reported that the website and the e-book were well-designed with various tasks and authentic materials which can help them enhance their speaking skills as they have more materials and exposures to Business English vocabulary.

Keywords: Business English, speaking skill, website development, Business English speaking, autonomous learning

1   INTRODUCTION

Students are expected to master broader skills in order to operate in the digital era (Keane, 2016). The aforementioned skills include creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking, or is better known as 4C"s which supports the traditional reading, writing and arithmetic mastery (Keane, 2012). The demand from the future workplace has shifted the way teachers manage the classroom, from focusing more on the delivery of learning materials, to operate on varied resources to bring out new ideas and solve real life problems.

To achieve this goal, that is to aid students with the currently demanded skills, governments and schools incorporate technology in the classrooms, especially in the higher education settings, where students are expected to work along the technology and gain broader knowledge and information. This attempt is in accordance with previously conducted researches which highlighted the advantages of using digital technologies and online platforms to aid students" learning process, such as Facebook (Shih, 2013), Google Docs (Suwantarathip, 2014), and Twitter (Harmandaoglu, 2012: Tur and Marin, 2015). In the vocational education setting where the present research will take place, teaching and learning with technology and internet were also encouraged to help students comprehend more discipline-specific knowledge which are highly valued in their future workplace, however only few students were motivated to learn English beyond the classrooms. Direct classroom observations revealed that such reluctance might be addressed to several factors. First, students did not really know how to use technology and internet to enhance their English skills as they have limited knowledge on useful websites to learn English. Secondly, students found the materials available online might not suit their English proficiency level or might be different from the topics they learnt in the classrooms.

For the said reasons, it is deemed important to develop online learning materials which suit the students" English level and cover the topics they learn in the classroom as an attempt to equip students with the digital skills they need in the near future and at the same time achieve the learning outcome set by the teachers. The present research aims to report the development process of a speaking simulation website for Business English students as well as exploring the students" perceptions on using the simulation website to enhance their speaking skill.

2   BACKGROUND

2.1   The Development of English Language Teaching

There has been a long-running debate about teaching and learning practices that have the most advantages in a second language classroom. In the 50s up to 70s, the world of language teaching had been dominated by the Audiolingual method (Skehan, 1996). It had been claimed that learning a second language has much to do with learning the main structure and pattern of the language, and therefore, isolated grammar practices were seen as the fastest way to learn a new language (Shortall, 1996).

The Audiolingual method offers techniques in which enable teachers to control the classroom and ensure that students have learned the structure (grammatical structures) of today"s lessons (Rivers, 1968). Simply put, the Audiolingual method linked the structuralist view and the Behaviorist theory, in which "form" is the main focus, and students will learn whatever "form" being presented in the classroom (Shortall, 1996, p,32).

However, in 1959, Chomsky offered a different perspective on how people acquire their first language that led to a major paradigm shift in language teaching (ibid). Language acquisition was no longer seen as a product of repeating the same pattern but requires creativity and uniqueness of individuals (Richards, 2001). Although the Audiolingual method offered a "comfort zone" for teachers, criticisms were evident in language classrooms; very little development is shown on students" language attainment, and only gifted learners benefited from this method (Stern, 1983). It was clear that teachers cannot determine how students develop their language as their development is processed through ,,natural" processes in which teachers and learners cannot simply pick what they want to learn (Ellis, 1994). In the late 70s, the Audiolingual Method became less prominent. From this point onwards, various alternative methods and approaches emerged which highlighted the functional aspect of language, such as Total Physical Response, Silent Way, Suggestopedia, etc. These alternative methods and approaches did not gain as much attention and were more like "coming" and "disappearing" one after another (Richards, 2001).

Only in the 1980s, a new era of language teaching began with the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which pay attention to functional communication and social interaction in a language classroom (Richards, 2001). During this period, Krashen (1981) also marked another paradigm shift by distinguishing acquisition and learning, and therefore, language teachers need to expose learners to use the language communicatively, rather than to practice through repeating the language. Along with the growing popularity of CLT, the notion of Task-based Learning surfaced, widely known as an extended version of CLT. Instead of focusing on "experience-based" learning, TBL offered "task" as a form of learning that focuses on meaning.

In TBL, meaningful tasks are given to the students where students solve the task, and only when they complete these tasks, the teacher discusses the language being used, makes adjustments and also corrections (Harmer, 2007). Rather than teaching language explicitly, using it as a tool to transmit messages is considered the most effective (Krashen and Terrel, 1983). In TBL, learners are also encouraged to analyze the relationship between form and meaning by referring to their language and applying it to a new target language (Willis D, 1996). Given these advantages, TBL also raises some concerns. One critical problem in using TBL in a

language classroom is the unlikeliness to achieve long-term progress. Students work on the task by using the language they have to express the ideas and solve the problem under time pressure. Students focus on delivering the meaning and often rely only on prefabricated chunks just to get across the meaning and solve the task, without making much effort to develop their interlanguage (Shortall, 1996).

2.2   The Changing Face of Language Learning

In the past, most learning occurred mostly inside the class. This affected most of the teaching approaches and teachers" beliefs on the best way to learn a language. As a consequence, teachers and schools focused more on the delivery of learning materials, how to create more learning opportunities in the classroom, and how to motivate students to learn more in the class (Richards, 2015). Nevertheless, technology and internet have changed the way learning occurs. Nowadays, students learn not only in the classroom, but also outside the classroom with the help of technology and internet. Such shift allows more opportunities to interact with native speakers, to engage in meaningful communication, which are to share ideas, feedback and comments through online platforms and media. Lankshear and Knobel (1997) and Jones and Hafner (2011) argued that these learning opportunities are more likely to be interactive, social, and multimodal which are significantly different from what happened in the past. Consequently, classroom learning has also shifted its focus, from focusing mostly on the learning process in the classroom to give more opportunities for students to learn beyond the classroom by giving them tasks that require online inquiry and give them guidelines to useful additional materials, and from focusing on language structure drilling to create more meaningful interaction tasks for authentic purposes.

2.3   Online Technologies to Assist Language Learning

Internet as a major resource of various written and verbal texts offers unlimited opportunities for the students to be engaged in authentic interaction (Richards, 2015). Gathering data and information from the internet to accomplish tasks is especially meaningful and motivating as students will use the internet to gather information to do their daily tasks (Linder, 2004). Online technology is now also integrated in the process of learning, whether within or beyond the classroom. Web 2.0 is especially popular among teachers and students since it can assist students" learning process. Luo (2013) conducted a research on 43 studies on the use of Web 2.0 to assist language learning and revealed the various platforms widely used by teachers and students. Wikis and blogs are commonly used to boost students" writing skills. For speaking skills, some common platforms used are video conferences and podcasts. For collaboration and boosting motivation, social networking tools are more preferred. In the recent years, Web 2.0 also provides mobile version which is easier to be accessed and can enhance students" performance.

2.4   The Underpinning Theories of Technology-Assisted Classrooms

Most of studies conducted on technology-assisted classrooms used constructivism as the underpinning theory. This theory takes into account students" prior knowledge, students" engagement during the learning process, and also all their learning experiences in shaping their new information and knowledge (Thomas, 2009). Interactive learning environments bring out students" autonomy and offer more flexibility for the learning process (Kessler, 2009). The incorporation of technology in the classrooms also brings various implications on the pedagogy. It is crucial to pay attention to the level of familiarity of the students to the technology being integrated. Not all students are digital natives, and it is possible that not all the students are familiar with the procedure and steps to use the technology in their learning process. For this reason, teachers should be able to align students" level of familiarity to the technology in the language learning process (Thomas, 2009). The integration of technology to the learning process does not also guarantee students" autonomy. Teachers should always provide detailed guidance, and scaffolding so that students can gain the best advantage of the technology in their learning process (Matthew et al., 2009). Teachers should not expect to gain the best advantage of this incorporation without putting efforts both from the students and also the teachers (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010). Adequate preparation and training for technology-incorporated classrooms should be done for this incorporation to run smoothly.

2.5   Current Available Technologies for Speaking Simulation and Practices

With the high demand of more effective speaking practices, various platforms are available for students to learn either for free or for a particular price. Speaking simulation sites are especially popular for students who are going to take speaking test, for example IELTS speaking simulation ielts-up.com and speaking9.com. These websites provide various samples of speaking samples which get high score and allow users to record their own speaking practice after the narrator deliver the questions online. Students can also upload their recording to be corrected by the teacher in 24 hours. Students can also download their own

recording to analyze the errors they made during the simulation. For students who do not understand the speakers" words, they can also read the transcript of the questions.
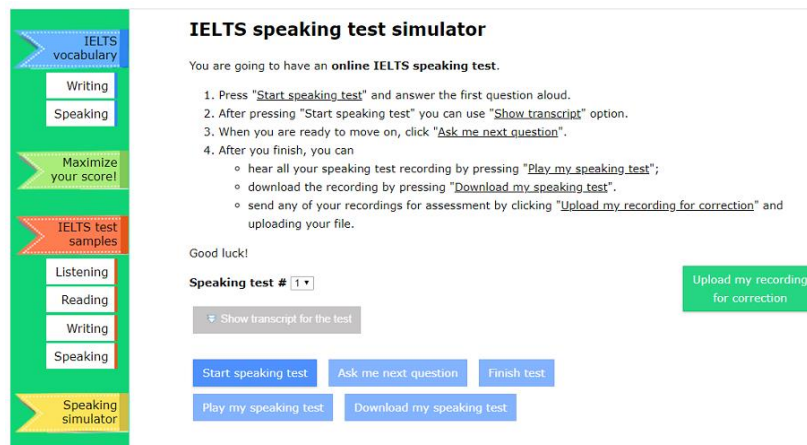

Fig. 1 User interface of ielts-up.com

Speaking9.com also offers similar features which allow students to practice the three parts of IELTS speaking tests. It can record students" answers and also offer more updated questions. This website somehow does not offer free correction, and instead encourages students to listen to their own recording to know their mistakes before taking the real test. Another drawback of this website is the pricing given which allows only 3-days trial and USD29.99 for one lifetime subscription which will be deemed pricey for the students. Another apparent disadvantage is, just like ielts-up.com, the website is designed with IELTS test-takers on mind, so students who want to learn and practice speaking for other purposes may find it unfit for their learning context.

3   RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1   Research Methods

This research is conducted using ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) Model which included evaluation of the users" perspectives which will be analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

Fig. 2 ADDIE model adapted from Branch (2009)

The first step to conduct the research is to analyze the performance gaps, or in this context, identifying students" needs and their performance gaps. This first step will be done through surveys and unstructured interviews with the students. The results of the survey and interviews will then be used for the basis of the second step, which is to design the appropriate testing methods for the desired outcome. Next, authentic learning materials and guidance are developed or combined based on the previous design. Supporting media which can help enhance students" learning performance are also created in this step. The implementation step is where students and teachers are prepared for the implementation of the website. The last step is evaluation which is crucial to collect students" feedbacks for a better design of the website.

3.2   Research Subject

The subjects are 10 students of Business Administration Department of State Polytechnic of Malang who take Business English class. The students" first languages are either Javanese or Bahasa Indonesia. The average proficiency of the students is pre-intermediate and intermediate English users as they have learned English from kindergarten, and they get used to reading English comics and novels, Western TV series, and also listen to English songs. The students would have learned English for Specific Purposes for three semesters when the research was carried out. The 20 students will try the website and the researcher will evaluate the website based on the feedback given by the students.

3.3   Data Collection

Data of the research are in the form of qualitative data which is used to explore users" feedbacks toward the implementation of the speaking website to enhance their speaking skills and promote more autonomous learning.

3.4   Methods to Collect Data

Data will be collected through direct observations, surveys, and unstructured interviews with the users of the website. The results will be coded based on their categories and presented in tables to make it easier for the readers to read the data.

3.5   Data Analysis

Data from semi-structured interview will be recorded and analyzed using thematic analysis using the framework of Clark and Braun (2013). The categorizing of the results of the interview is used to make it easier for the readers in comprehending the findings of the research.

4   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1   Digital material development

In this current research, there are two materials developed, namely e-book and website. The e-book consists of 10 topics related to Business English, such as business meetings, business presentations, business trips, and small talks. "English for Business" was designed to improve students" English skills by adapting digital materials to suit the needs and the context of Polinema students.

This book was developed for self-study materials for B2-C1 EFL learners and is also available online on our website: https://wespeak.id or on our Canvas LMS course through this URL: https://canvas.instructure.com/enroll/4F RCKD. This e-book discussed phrases and expressions commonly used in business context by highlighting global business culture and ethics. To make it easier for students to view videos or audios, the digital materials and references in this e-book can be accessed by clicking the link available in each section, or by scanning the QR Code for users who prefer to print this book. To practice speaking, students are advised to record their speaking on Vocaroo.com, where they can store their recordings for three months for free or download the audio once they finished recording. Some practices can also be done online through the source website by clicking the link in each exercise. To make it easier for student, the materials are also available in the form of website through this link: www.wespeak.id.

4.2   E-book evaluation

Graves (2000) and McGrath (2013) offered a framework to develop or adapt effective teaching materials as follows: 1. The materials should target learners" instructional, professional, and/or personal/affective needs. 2. The materials should have a clear focus. 3. The materials should have appropriate proficiency level and allow teachers to differentiate in contexts. 4. The materials should be integrated with other skills or uses of technology. 5. The materials should incorporate speaking activities with assessment. 6. The materials should be able to engage learners. 7. The materials should be authentic. 8. The materials should be updated. 9. The materials should develop students" intercultural and critical social awareness. 10. The materials should have a lot of variations, for example in terms of groupings, purposes, learning styles, and nature of materials.

Teachers should be aware the need to contextualize their teaching materials so that the teaching materials could be engaging and interesting for the students. In the current research context, the speaking simulation website is seen as relevant to address students" needs and to provide them with opportunities to learn speaking at their own pace. The current materials development was evaluated by one teacher who taught

English for Business and was also evaluated by 13 students who were the potential users. The result of the evaluation from the teacher is as followed:

Table 1. Evaluation from the teacher

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Fair	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The instruction for each task and content is clear		√			
The materials present language in a simple, meaningful manner	√				
All tasks are transferred from real life	√				
The texts are authentic		√			
There is a fine balance between content and content related tasks	√				
The materials provide content knowledge from relevant areas		√			
The unit sticks to the same topic, does not jump from one to another		√			
Each content has a reference (to show where it is taken and learners refer to further information)		√			
The topics are up-todate		√			
They aim at real daily language in business context		√			
They focus on daily speech patterns (social language)		√			
The topics are interesting		√			
The materials try to raise cultural awareness		√			
The materials are not in conflict with our culture		√			
The materials utilized an integrated-skills approach		√			
The tasks are not piled up, there is a logical organization		√			
The tasks are organized from simple to complex	√				
There is smooth transition from one task to another		√			
The tasks foster cognitive involvement of learners		√			
The tasks foster cognitive involvement of learners			√		
They provide contextualized grammar practice stemmed from the content		√			
The book is visually attractive	√				
The digital materials are easy to access	√				

After revising some parts of the book to improve the quality of the e-book, the e-book was given to 13 students to be evaluated and given feedback. The result of the feedback is as follow:

Table 2. Results of the questionnaire

Statements	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Do you think the design is attractive?			8.3%	33.3%	58.3%
Do you think the language used is suitable to your level?				41.7%	58.3%
Do you think the topic is interesting?		7.7%		30.8%	61.5%
Do you think the materials are up to date?				33.3%	66.7%
Do you think the tasks are challenging?			7.7%	53.8%	38.5%
Do you think the book is suitable for self-study materials?			15.4%	38.5%	46.2%

4.3   Website evaluation

Along with the e-book, a website was also developed to make it easier for the students who want to access the materials directly from their browser. After getting some feedback from the evaluator, the website was revised with more interesting layout and brighter colors. For the trial, 13 students tried and evaluated the website through an online questionnaire. The result of the questionnaire is as follows:

Table 3. The result of the online questionnaire

Statements	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Navigation (how easily you can access the content of the website)			7.7%	15.4%	76.9%
The design of the website:				23.1%	76.9%
The content of the website:			7.7%	23.1%	69.2%
The overall quality of the website:			7.7%	46.2%	46.2%

Most of the students agree that the design of the website is good, including the choice of the color and also the illustrations used in the website. They also thought that the website is easy to navigate due to its simple user interface and its simple design. Students also thought than the content is interesting, in which they found various interesting materials, authentic videos, and a lot of opportunities to simulate their speaking skills by using Vocaroo.com. They also provided some suggestions, for example: to connect the website to social media, so it will be easier to access and promote. They also wanted more topics to be covered so they can have more opportunities to learn and practice their speaking.

5   CONCLUSION

The present research aimed to develop and evaluate an e-book and a website created to solve students" lack of easily accessed self-study materials for Business English speaking skill that is in accordance with their curriculum and suitable for their English proficiency level. The research utilized ADDIE Model to develop and evaluate digital materials for Business English students with four main stages namely, Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate. The e-book consisted of ten topics chosen based on the needs analysis and literature reviews. The evaluation was carried out by one English teacher and 13 Business English students as users, each of them filled in surveys to evaluate the website. The results revealed that the Business English speaking website provided varied sources and varied tasks for them to learn and practice their speaking skill independently, making them more autonomous in their learning process, although some of its features need more improvement. The students also reported that the website and the e-book were well-designed with various tasks and authentic materials which can help them enhance their speaking skills as they have more materials and exposures to Business English vocabulary.

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